THE

RECONSTRUCTIONIST

DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF JUDAISM AS A RELIGIOUS CIVILIZATION, TO THE UPBUILDING OF ISRAEL'S ANCIENT HOMELAND, AND TO THE FURTHERANCE OF UNIVERSAL FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND PEACE.

Vol. II. May 15, 1936 Iyar 23, 5696 No. 7

EDITORIALS

THE RIOTS IN PALESTINE

THE NEW SEMINARY-UNIVERSITY

WANTED: A NEW KIND OF JEWISH *WISSENSCHAFT*

RELIGION AND COMMUNISM

by Charles Frankel

WHY HUMANISM IS NOT ENOUGH

by Mordecai M. Kaplan

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EDITORIALS

The Riots in Palestine

THE outbreak of riots in Palestine is a source of deep distress to all Jews who seek in Palestine a permanent home for large numbers of our people and for our reconstructed national life. Once again we are brought face to face with the organized resistance of the Arabs. We had hoped that the material prosperity which the *yishub* had brought to the Arabs would convince them that we mean them no harm, that, on the contrary, we look forward to a greater share of prosperity for both peoples. Why is it that, despite the good which our presence in Palestine has wrought, Arabs still hate and fear us, still burn and pillage and attack our people with ferocity undiminished?

The immediate causes of the present disturbances cannot be traced to any one source. Like all social phenomena, the current conflict has been occasioned by a variety of forces. The effendis have never ceased their activity; the Nazis may have had a hand in the uprisings; the communists have contributed their share toward cultivating the pogrom psychology; and our own hot-headed chauvinists have not failed to utter inflammatory threats against the Arabs. But behind these immediate causes lies the more basic power of an awakened Arab nationalism, emerging, as historically it must, out of the decaying feudal system. Jewish colonization, industry and commerce have stirred to life a long-dormant nationalism. It has been pointed out that the national movements of Europe which developed during the nineteenth century, and which led to the consolidation of the modern national states, are belatedly coming into being in the east in the twentieth century. The so-called bourgeois or commercial revolution, which inevitably follows upon the disintegration of feudalism, is now taking shape in those countries which, until recently, were backward portions of empires.

In view of these considerations, has it not been short-sighted on our part to depend solely upon economic factors to reconcile the Arabs to our presence in Palestine? Was it not chimerical for us to assume that Arab nationalism might not arise to resist Jewish nationalism in Palestine? We should have known that one nationalism begets another. Our course has been either to deny that such a nationalism was bound to emerge, or to persuade ourselves that its leadership was unscrupulous and that therefore it was not legitimate. But at no time have we made an organized effort to address ourselves to the Arab people who felt the stirrings of national spirit, and to articulate to them exactly what our aspirations were in Palestine. We have not carried on propaganda among them in their own language; and by "their own language"

we mean both, literally their own language, Arabic, and figuratively, the language of simple and forthright exposition.

Even the most enlightened and intelligent people are susceptible to propaganda. If only one side of an argument is heard, wrong notions are bound to be created. The Arabs of Palestine are a primitive and unsophisticated folk, and because they have been exposed to only one version of the significance of Zionism, they have misunderstood and misinterpreted us. It is high time that we reckoned with Arab nationalism in a serious and organized fashion. Nothing is more important at the present time than the creation of a Jewish press *in Arabic,* to function as an antidote to the propaganda of those who would utilize this new nationalism for unscrupulous ends. We must make the Arab masses understand that the political ambitions of Arab nationalism can be realized in the vast territories in the east where the bulk of Arabs reside, but that in Palestine, Arab nationalism, like Jewish nationalism, must be so adapted as to make possible the peaceful cooperation of two national groups.

The rebuilding of Palestine for our people today is a matter of life and death. We cannot afford to jeopardize our future there by failing to solve, on a permanent basis of peace, the problem of our relations with the Arabs.

The New Seminary-University

THE Jewish Teachers Seminary, organized in New York City in 1918, to train qualified teachers for the various elementary and secondary Jewish schools of the United States which are identified for the most part, with the secular-nationalist movement, has expanded its scope and has recently been incorporated in the State of New York as "The Jewish Teachers Seminary and Peoples University." The founders and advisors, who include in their number a large group of leaders and educators drawn from many sectors of Jewish life, plan to establish four distinct departments of the university: 1) a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 2) a Teachers Seminary (which will continue the work of the original institution), 3) a Labor College, and 4) a Vocational Training School.

The broader purpose of the expanded project is expressed in the act of incorporation as follows: "To train, in the light of scientific knowledge and historical Jewish ideals, men and women for the Jewish teaching profession, for research and community service; to study scientifically Jewish history, religion and ethics, literature, also social and labor relations; to make available to the general public a constructive knowledge of the spiritual and social ideals of the Jewish people, their history and their Jewish and social scholarship; to establish and maintain a library." The curricula, as outlined in the prospectus issued by the new university, are exhaustive and comprehensive. In the Liberal Arts and Sciences program, three languages of instruction will be used, Hebrew, Yiddish and English, depending upon the character of the particular course of study. The student will be taught to "integrate Jewish learning and scholarship with general culture." The school will "aim to bring into effective harmony the ideals of the Jewish heritage and the ideals of the American environment of its students."

The Labor College will attempt to indicate to the student to what extent "the economic problems of the United States bear a direct relation to the future of the Jews in this country." Questions like the overcrowding of professions, "fluctuating racial changes in trades and crafts, the monopolization and decentralization of industries," problems which are bound "to have a far-reaching influence on the future of the Jews in the United States," will be carefully investigated.

The Vocational Training School will establish agricultural training schools "as a solution to the social program of the Jews of America." The productivization

of Jews, a problem which has been vexing thoughtful leaders for the past few years, will be dealt with in this branch of the university. Special courses for prospective *haluzim* will be offered, and special attention will be given to the special conditions "—of soil and climate, of linguistic and social environment—that agricultural settlers in Palestine must cope with."

In sum, the Seminary-University is an ambitious undertaking, enbracing a diversity of interests. We, of the Reconstructionist, naturally approve of any institution which is able to contemplate Jewish life in its totality. The curricula, as described, incarnate the conception of Judaism as a civilization. We are particularly pleased to observe that, although the fundamental approach of its founders is that of the humanists, the Seminary-University will reckon with religion and its vital role in the civilization of the Jewish people. The seal of the new institution bears the biblical quotation, "Ho! everyone that is thirsty, come to the waters" (Isaiah, 55,1), together with the Rabbinic comment, " 'waters' refers to Torah." If the seal really represents the spirit in which this Seminary-University is founded, we are confident that the noblest traditions of Jewish learning will be maintained.

But we are disturbed by one circumstance. A university has meaning, if it reflects the integrated will of a nation or a community. When a group clearly envisages its character and purpose, when it has unequivocally articulated its ideals, a university can be established to crystallize that purpose and those ideals. A university must begin by reflecting a life; it then proceeds to enrich it. The Catholics, for example, through their vast system of education crystallize and articulate their integrated will as a Catholic community. The Hebrew University in Jerusalem, emerging out of the Zionist movement, is the crystallized expression of the Jewish will to live as a nation. The Yeshivah College in New York reflects the clearly formulated ideology of Orthodoxy. Insofar as Orthodox Jewry is aware of its philosophy and program, it is justified in creating a college which translates that philosophy and program into educational terms.

What the Seminary-University, however, seeks to incarnate is as yet hardly envisaged even by those outstanding individuals who are participating in its establishment, much less by the masses of Jews to whom they hope to appeal. So long as that is the case, the institution will represent a process of building from the roof down instead of from firm foundations up. The time is not yet ripe, we believe, for such a university, as happy as we should be to see it organized. The concept of Judaism which the Seminary-University represents has only just begun to make an impression upon the minds of American Jews. The misunderstanding which we encounter in our attempts to promulgate this philosophy convinces us that most American Jews have not yet learned to inhabit the universe of discourse in which the philosophy moves. The very concept of "community," which is basic to an appreciation of the implications of this whole point of view, is just beginning to seep down to the rank and file of American Jews; it will be long before a "community will" emerges to demand crystallization in a university.

We should very much deplore the failure of such project as this one, for failure would react prejudicially against the philosophy which it seeks to advance. At this early stage in its development, any setback might discredit it for a generation. At the present time, the sponsors will be compelled to address themselves to a chaotic and disorganized Jewry for support of the Seminary-University, and their task will consist, for the most part, in generating a demand for the project. We would advocate rather the widespread creation of organized communities. When these communities have begun to function, they will, of themselves, require and demand a university in which their "com-

munity will" can be expressed. At that time, the establishment of a university may be projected with greater assurance of success.

Wanted: A New Kind of Jewish *Wissenschaft*

WHEN the Germans undertake a job, they do it thoroughly. The Nazis have undertaken to solve their "Jewish problem," and they will not be satisfied merely to reduce German Jewry to second-class status and to deprive them of their means of livelihood. They are planning to make a scientifically perfect job of disposing of their Jews. In the interests of this noble objective, the Institute, founded by Hitler, for rewriting German history according to National Socialist ideas, recently announced that its grant from the government had been substantially increased and that it will now expand its program to include the assembling of a complete anti-Jewish library in all the world's literary languages. According to the New York *Times*, "Eventually, it will issue a complete history of the Jews from earliest times, devoting special attention to their development in Europe."

This is one of the most menacing moves that the Nazis have taken, for they are attempting to perform a "service" to the other nations of the world. They are not satisfied to exterminate the Jews of Germany; they want to instruct other governments in the theory and practice of Jew-hatred. They will present the world with their own version of the Jewish past and their own conception of the status of the Jewish people in our day.

Certainly, at no time has the need been greater than now for Jews to counteract this vicious and hateful intention. We have been misinterpreted by everyone; is it not time that we clarified our position in the eyes of mankind? When the forerunners of these same Germans carried on their "higher anti-Semitism" through the instrumentality of an otherwise authentic and scientific study of the Bible, our people made little or no reply. The traditionalists refused to acknowledge the validity of the whole scientific approach, and thereby disqualified themselves entirely from answering the reproach of those who belittled and perverted our literary tradition.

Indeed, German Jewry did develop what is called *Juedische Wissenschaft,* the scientific study of Judaism, about a century ago. But the scholars who worked in this field either acquiesced slavishly in the discrediting conclusions of the non-Jewish scholars, or confined their investigations to those antiquities which bore no relation to the life and destiny of Jews in the modern world. As a result, Jewish *Wissenschaft* has hardened in the mould of archaeological investigation. Even in our own day, the major works of Jewish scholarship have concerned themselves with the remote aspects of the Jewish past. Any attempt to relate historical research to modern realities has been branded "journalism," and unworthy of true "scientific" status.

Apparently, the threat that the Nazis might write our history for us in the light of present-day realities, together with the increased self-consciousness which persecution has effected, have combined to direct the thoughts of living scholars to the urgent question of the future direction of Jewish *Wissenschaft.* A recent issue of the *Juedische Rundschau* contains an illuminating symposium on this question. The editors address a number of questions to a dozen leading Jewish scholars. They were asked what they believed to be the future of Jewish *Wissenschaft* in Germany, whether or not the new conditions necessitated a new structure and content for *Wissenschaft,* whether there should be a close relation between *Wissenschaft* and life.

The answers are extremely interesting. They divide into two kinds: Prof. S. Dubnow, of Riga, Prof. Z. Diesendruck of Cincinnati, and Dr. Simon Ravidowitz,

of London plead for a new kind of *Wissenschaft,* one that will throw the light of the past upon the darkness of the present and will illumine the exact character of our present problems. They urge that scholars cease from riveting their eyes only upon the past, that they concern themselves with interpreting the true spirit of our being as a people to ourselves and to the world. They believe that *Wissenschaft* should now be more than merely historical; it should be ideological, so that the inner life of our people may be enriched. Dr. Ravidowitz particularly stresses the need for a *Wissenschaft* of the Jews, and not only of Judaism, which will include the scientific study of our economic, social, artistic and educational life for the purpose of reconstructing our lives in accordance with the demands of new conditions. Dr. Dubnow remarks that there is a dead Torah and a living Torah; he maintains that *Wissenschaft* should advance the living Torah. Others, like Elbogen, Heinemann and Feuchtwanger range in their opinions from the defense of the old type of *Wissenschaft* to a vague awareness that there is something wrong with it.

We believe that such a symposium was very necessary to fix our attention upon the burning need for a kind of Jewish scholarship which will be relevant to our lives. Such scholarship can be just as scientific as the kind to which we have been accustomed. We do not minimize the value of archaeology. Indeed, no human knowledge is altogether irrelevant, and that knowledge which can help us reconstruct the life and culture of ancient peoples is particularly interesting. But we do insist that archaeology is not enough. In an age of crisis, priority must be given to the cultivation of that knowledge which is of immediate need. In the face of a challenge such as the Nazi institute presents, we cannot afford to be without that fundamental and scientific knowledge of ourselves which alone can fling refutation in the faces of our enemies. We need such knowledge for ourselves and our children, if we are to retain our sanity and self-respect in the midst of a hostile world.

Religion and Communism

By CHARLES FRANKEL

I.

RELIGION and communism are so similar in many of their manifestations that the long struggle between religious thought and communist thought has appeared particularly painful.

Is there any reconciliation possible between these two camps? What are the charges which have been leveled back and forth? In how far have they any basis in fact? Religion has termed communism materialistic, anti-God; it has claimed that communists are cruelly seeking the destruction of all society. Communism, religious leaders (notably the Pope) have claimed, sinks to an insensate worship of matter, of material well-being; it totally disregards the divinity in man and in the world. In this "materialism" it is anti-God. Moreover, it is anti-God because it acts against the natural and God-given right to private property; it aims to defeat the divine Law. And finally, communists, once they gain power, are cruel and merciless; their doctrines of class war and social ownership destroy all human society when they take effect.

What has communism had to say to all this? It charges religion with being the opiate of the people, an instrument for the domination of the proletariat by the capitalist class. Religion has been other-worldly; it has promised the masses "pie in the sky," and the result has been a deadly, anti-social passiveness which has defeated all hope for change on this earth. Moreover, should religion suddenly—and for the communists, miraculously—take on a revolutionary nature, it would be impotent. Seemingly, religion can only act

to dull the social emotions, and never to sharpen them. The final accusation that communism levels at religion, e.g., that it is supernatural, is really the most telling and basic. This is basic not so much in what the accusation actually states as in all that it implies: for it implies that religion is obsolete and false and superstitious; it implies that religion stands in the way of the enlightenment of the masses; finally, and most important, it implies that, in socialist society, religion will serve no function, and will die off along with other vestiges of the capitalist world.

II

Let us examine these charges, and see how far they are justified. We find, in the final analysis, a surprising unanimity of interest and aim.

Religion's charge that communism has fallen to a vulgar materialism carries some modicum of truth. The flush of battle has obscured to communist eyes some of the aims of the Day of Judgment—that is, the revolution. The communists have been apt to make material welfare the main, if not the only, end and goal. Efficiency has its place, certainly: but only as a means to an end. Material welfare has its place, to be sure; but it has not the sole place. That higher sort of spiritual life which can be built upon a basis of material well-being must never be lost sight of. In one respect, at least, the whole purpose of the struggle for material welfare has no meaning unless this higher aim remains clearly in view.

But religion's charge is only a little justified nevertheless. A human being does not live in a vacuum; flowers do not grow without soil and water. It is well-nigh impossible for men to live the spiritual life when they are caught in the wheel of a bitter, impersonal industrial scheme, a scheme which gives them little chance to do anything but look after their stomachs. Perhaps it is their revolutionary ardor which has caused the communists to forget the final things of life. Perhaps it is the fact that communism itself is the product of an acquisitive and materialistic society which has made communists ready to sacrifice so many of the goods of life for material well-being. But one thing is not to be denied: material well-being is indispensable if we wish as many as possible to enjoy the higher things of life. These higher things of life can be made available to all, if we apply intelligence. Communism, in its fight for material welfare, no matter how much it may obscure and deprecate the spiritual issues, is making the first step towards that spiritual life to which religion itself looks.

The religionist's charge that communism is anti-God, is an unhappy distortion of religious ideals and values. The problem of human beings' living together is a fundamental one which it is religion's practically unique task, because of the nature of her position, to solve; the protection and stimulation of individual personality is a problem which religion has to face. Religion perverts itself when it attacks communism as anti-God, and sanctions institutions which aggravate men's vices and set them at each other's throats. What has happened to religious spiritualism when it attacks communism and puts God on the side of conditions which would materialistically kill off the individual spirit; which would make human life inhuman? Communists may, for a time, have forgotten man's spiritual side. It cannot be denied that they have emphasized matter at the expense of other values. But religionists, let us hope, are not blind: let them look about. Can they fail to see how unalterably opposed to religious ideals is the acquisitive society?

Religion's charge that communism goes against the "natural, divine right to private property" is based on obsolete, pre-Darwinian concepts of natural law, and static, natural rights. Modern anthropology and economics give no evidence that private property is either natural or divine. If religion is to serve modern needs it has to give up these outlived modes of thought.

But one does not have to go even so far

as to say that conceptions of natural rights are obsolete. One need but remember religion's role as the support of human personality in an impersonal world, and he will come to wonder what vagary of the religious mind has led it to place property rights over human rights. If religion will talk in terms of natural rights, can it possibly place the rights of human personality lower than property rights, *and then call communism anti-God?* It is very fortunate that religious leaders are increasingly coming to recognize religion's role in the struggle which is enveloping modern society: a struggle which is apt to become so cruel and ruthless that only a constructive religious emphasis can avert bestiality. Religion, in the person of the Pope, was at least partly correct in seeing "the destruction of all society" attendant with the communist revolution. Religion is wrong in putting the blame wholly on the communists. But an important truth is hit when the precariousness of our situation is emphasized. It is no small battle that the modern world is fighting; the new world which men are dying for every day may be destroyed in the very attempt to create it. If the consequences of this battle,—at best, a vicious one—are to be at all mitigated, religions must play their roles; the religious ethic must be insisted upon. Religious leaders are coming to realize this more and more; neither communism nor religion wishes the destruction of human society. It would seem to be peculiarly religion's position to emphasize those spiritual values which make human society human and livable.

III

Let us look at the other side of the conflict, at the accusations which communists have flung at religion. What we have seen as typical heretofore, we shall discern to hold true again: basically, there will emerge a common ground upon which religion and communism can reach conciliation.

The communists hold that religion has never served any purpose but to create a deadly passivity, or to sanction existing institutions. To the communist, that damns religion for modern society (and, it must be remembered, that it is *all* religion which serves this function). It is in *religion's essential nature to serve conservatism.* In what ways has religion been the "opiate of the people"?

Religion, for the communist, turns men's minds away from the pressing facts of the daily world to the promise of that heavenly paradise which will amply compensate him for his sufferings on this earth. Religion, by making that promise, breeds a deadly resignation, a brute-like acceptance of a brutal sordidness. The charge is not altogether justified. Religion has, at times, been the opiate of the masses. But that has not always been so; moreover, our experience of the twentieth century is proving that religion will no longer accept that role. Religion is looking towards its basic position and lasting functions. Its bold, poetic assertions are becoming louder day by day: man's personality is to be protected, man's struggle is divine.

One need but read as far as the Prophets to become convinced of the falsity of the communist accusation. The God of the Prophets gives ample testimony to the regenerative forces inherent in religion and its revolutionary and reawakening strength: "Awake and sing, ye who have dwelt in the dust!" cries the Prophet as he tells of the divine justice:

"The Lord will enter into judgment
With the elders of his people and the princes thereof:
'It is ye that have eaten up the vineyard;
The spoil of the poor is in your houses;
What meant ye that ye crush my people,
And grind the face of the poor?'
Saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts."
(Isaiah, 3, 14-15)

And in our day, religion again comes to speak of earthly justice, the Kingdom

of God on this earth. The modern man finds it very hard to accept the promise of a heavenly paradise which will compensate him for the suffering of this world; the most advanced of modern religious thinkers have given up that unworthy and irreligious belief in the type of immortality in which one can practically telephone one's wife in heaven and find out how she is behaving herself. Moreover, the modern man finds the prospect of a livable world in this life much more encouraging than did his ancestors in earlier times; the whole world which scientific control opens to him is his if he wishes. A world of material plenty and spiritual justice is within his power to reach. The religionist, forcing himself to the discrimination of values, is stretching forth to that promised world in which the discernment of value will not be so difficult, not so difficult because it will be a world resonant of value and meaning, because it will be a world in which the light of God will be much clearer on sea and land.

Religion is not in its very nature a force for conservatism. To some extent, it is true that it has sanctioned existing institutions: but, nevertheless within the framework of a bitter, materialist society, religion constantly did find the power to assert the superiority of spiritual values over economic appetites. Religion—and it is to her credit—set down ideals which would act as vital elements in the fostering of a spiritual creed. That religion accepted a materialistic society to the extent that she did is to be deplored; nevertheless, within that tight framework, religion did manage to alleviate some of that society's effects. To the extent that she was unsuccessful even in this task gives but another proof that, in the long run, religion's spiritualism must make her the enemy of capitalism. Religion did not altogether succeed in asserting spirituality as a way of life, because spirituality cannot function freely in the acquisitive society. Religion has been, and is again a moving force. For the communists to maintain that religion cannot be other than conservative because it has had conservatives in its fold, would seem to be stretching a point. Religion must be interpreted as one typically human aspect of the human animal's reaction to his environment; and, like other aspects of that reaction, like art and philosophy, religion has had both its conservative and radical side. To rule out all religion because religion has produced its conservatives appears outlandish. As well summarily to rule out art!

Religion's spirituality will largely carry it to a position of enmity towards capitalist society. Even then, however, communists will continue to dismiss religion. They claim that even if religion take on revolutionary doctrine, it cannot be very powerful in awakening the masses of the people. They look at the Gandhi movement in India, essentially a religious one, and they express doubt as to its ultimate success; they feel it lacks the power to organize, the insight to lead. But communists cannot deny that religion's appeal becomes stronger, as it becomes more revolutionary; religious appeal is always stronger as its revolutionary spirit is increasingly fostered. The power of the Gandhi movement has, it seems, been well demonstrated. Communists, themselves, are coming to recognize that religion is taking on revolutionary trends. How can they doubt religion's power? They have constantly asserted it as a powerful agent in breeding conservatism; but a revolutionary spirit is much more fruitful and vital; it promises much more. How can communists then assert that religion has no power to move and generate the living forces of the people? Will it not be much more powerful in its progressivism than it would be in its conservatism?

IV

But it is communism's last accusation which is most basic. Religion is essentially a supernatural and hence obsolete human expression; it is out of keeping with modern knowledge; it serves to keep the people in ignorant superstition. As a vestige of capitalist domination, religion is bound

to die in a classless society because it no longer serves its class function. There will no longer be in socialist society any basic need for religion. On its face this communist declaration that religious feeling will no longer be a natural human reaction once socialist society is attained seems to be rather glib; only the facile definition of religion as supernaturalism surpasses it. An analysis of the religious attitude is necessary to remove this last charge; and the analysis entails an interpretation of religion which it will become necessary for religious leaders, as well as communists, to accept.

Religion answers an eternal need of the human personality to be bolstered in the face of a seemingly purposeless, meaningless, and valueless universe. Religion boldly and bravely apprehends value to the world, in the face of the apparent meaningless flux of a colorless panorama. Religion, in short, is faith in life, faith in its worthwhileness. That is what religion is and what it does.

Religious people are divided in two classes: the consciously religious, and the naturally and unconsciously religious; or, as William James would have put it, the sick-souled, and the healthy-minded. Only certain persons, the sick-souled, need a conscious belief in God to bolster a waning faith in life. Others, the healthy-minded, have God within them; they radiate sun and life and vigor naturally; to them there need be no conscious projection of the God-idea into the universe because there is already a meaning and purpose in life for them, the healthy-minded. But to the healthy-minded's l e s s fortunate brethren, r e l i g i o n bolsters a temperamental setup, which discerns no purpose in the universe, by asserting meaning and value. And it must be remembered that the sick-souled, no less than the healthy-minded, are natural phenomena on this planet which can be either a home or a prison.

Communists, like all other groups of people, are divided between the sick-souled and the healthy-minded. There are those among them who feel no need for religion; basically, God is unconsciously within them: the world is good at bottom, for these. All it needs is communism to make its surface clean. Other communists, in the ardor of battle, have ceased to question at all. Those who fall in these categories are unconsciously possessed of the religious characteristic of mind. And the third category, made up of those who feel the evil of this world most sensitively, turns to communism to give sustenance and worth and meaning to the world.

But everyone is not now a communist and revolutionary; and, after revolution is past, and socialist society is a reality, nobody will be a communist. People will, in the future, as they have in the past, be stricken by inexplicable suffering; evil will still be present, and human beings—because they are human beings—will revolt against it. Communists promise no fool's paradise. In the presence of evil, the religious reaction, the assertion of the God-ideal will be the natural result.

Socialist society would stagnate without that typical human reaction to the world which is religious feeling. Religion, because it supplies a purpose to life, because it is the protector of human personality in an impersonal world, must, of necessity, be a generative force in society. What else will keep society moving? Dialectical materialism is not mechanistic. It recognizes that it is *men,* acted upon by society, who move society. As long as it is men and not machines who keep society dynamic, religion, which supplies meaning and value to life, is a prerequiste and prime factor in progress. Without man's audacious and bold projection of his aspiration into the universe he will not have faith enough to live at all, let alone to grapple with and to solve the world's problems. Without religion there could be no progress because men would find no value in living.

For the very same reason that man is given a faith in the worthwhileness of life, religion, in its poetic expression, supplies the end and aim of living—an end which emerges from religion's very na-

ture. That aim is the development, the protection, and the stimulation of individual personality. It is what Santayana would choose to call the religious ideal of charity, and what the Prophets would call justice. Religion supplies that ideal because it is the bolsterer of individual personality in the face of a depressing and meaningless world: and in doing so it rescues communism from a deadly worship of material welfare for its own sake.

Religion, therefore, should function easily in a classless order, when its ethic and spirituality are not attacked by a materialist society. This functioning of religion has its place in a classless society and will not be ruled out. And religion's functioning is not merely beneficial: its functioning is essential if men are to realize their possibilities. If communism is to attain that stage in which the State will have withered away, it must look to the resources of religious idealism. Only religious idealism can give men the faith and vigor and love to function in such an order.

The appearance of religion in human life will be present as long as men remain men: religion cannot be done away with. As long as humans live and struggle, as long as there is mud and dirt, men will turn their eyes upward to the light, they will project their aspiration into the universe. Bravely and imaginatively, they will seek the eternal ideal and set value to their world. That is sublimely to man's credit, and it is religion's own proof and justification.

Why Humanism Is Not Enough

By Mordecai M. Kaplan

THE modern outlook on life tends to be humanistic rather than theological. The modern spirit tries to solve all human problems by reliance on the power of intelligence. It looks for guidance to the human understanding rather than to any traditional body of doctrine or law, which is assumed to be supernaturally revealed. This is a complete reversal of the religious attitude of the Middle Ages, when God and His revelation were taken for granted, fundamentally on the basis of tradition; all ethical and philosophical thinking was then an attempt to elaborate the logical and practical implications of supernaturally revealed doctrine. It is, therefore, inevitable that many in our day should question whether the God-idea and the religion associated with it are needed altogether, whether worship may not be a mere relic of the past without meaning or function in modern life. They argue that, since the main function of religion in the past was to validate what, according to tradition was the ideal life and the ideal world, and since we today find that tradition can no longer guide us, religion must hinder more than it can help human adjustment. Nothing is to be gained by evoking the God-idea.

The fundamental error in that kind of humanism is the assumption of a fixed and static conception of God, confined to the traditional view of Him as the author of the specific laws and customs that have come down from the past. The truth, however, is that by the same process by which the human mind comes to think more clearly of man and the world, it is bound to learn to think more clearly about God. A brief review of the different meanings that God has had for men at different levels of civilization will make clear, that *what God means to us depends mainly upon our ideal of human life, or life as it ought to be, and that the way we conceive that ideal depends upon which of the following levels of civilization we have attained.*

(1) If we are so minded as to expect that every fleeting impulse of the individual ought to be fulfilled, we are living on the impulse level of civilization. That is the level on which primitive man prob-

ably lived in prehistoric times. Whenever he had a wish that he could not fulfill by some simple and direct action of his own, he would invoke the aid of some deity to fulfill it for him. Children and naive people today often have similar expectations. They feel that the world owes them not only a living but whatever else would contribute to their immediate happiness. God represents to them the assurance that these wishes are attainable. But whoever realizes the folly of such expectations, whoever understands that its fulfillment of our desires is limited by natural law and human society must look upon such a childlike conception of God as superstition.

(2) On a higher level, men recognize that what ought to be frequently involves a sacrifice of immediate individual desire to conform to the accepted norms and standards of the society in which they live. The appetites, whims and passions of the individual must be subordinated to the regulations, laws and institutions that are held sacred by the ethnic or religious groups to which one belongs. This represents the authoritarian and moral level of evaluation. At this level, the first glimmerings of universal law and order give rise to the conception of God as the author of duties and obligations to which one must conform though they conflict with desire. In the consequent reward which God is regarded as meting out for obedience, man expresses his first intimations of life as an orderly instead of a whim-governed process, and of what ought to be in terms of society as a whole instead of as revolving merely about his own ego. As this orderly process is never fully manifest in the destinies of men on earth, the scene of ultimate reward and punishment is frequently transferred to a posthumous life in another world. "Know that the reward of the righteous is reserved for the future that is to come."

(3) But the level of authoritarian morality is not yet the highest level on which conduct may be evaluated. For there comes a time when the laws, customs and *mores* enacted by authority, and supported by public opinion, are called into question. That happens as soon as those laws, customs and *mores* come to be regarded as hampering the fulfillment of one's real self. This revolt against traditional authority and morality is further incited by the increased knowledge which usually dawns upon the mind at this juncture, for such knowledge leads man to suspect the tenability of the sanctions, of the whys and the wherefores of the laws and standards to which he is expected to conform. Instead of accepting as genuine the benefit which it is supposed will accrue to self or to society from what is designated good, or the harm from what is accounted bad, men come to suspect that nothing but the arbitrary will of those in power is responsible for those evaluations. Likewise, the godhood of the deity whose will is supposed to be the arbiter of good and evil is discovered to be an illusion. At such times men sometimes rise who make personal and social welfare, in the light of human experience, rather than traditional morality, their measuring rod of right and wrong. It is this level of evaluation that we designate as the ethical level. When it is adopted, it results in concomitant changes in one's conception of God.

This is well illustrated in the religion of the canonical Prophets. With them arose a new conception of God. They refused to regard God as the author of the social practices and standards accepted by their people. They insisted that only those laws should be obeyed as God's, which commanded men to deal righteously with one another and cease exploiting one another. From their ethical level of evaluation, the religion of their contemporaries was idolatry. A being who could be invoked in support of unjust laws and institutions could not be God. But their repudiation of the religion which invested the traditional standards of their day with divine sanction did not lead the Prophets to a repudiation of God. They identified God as the

Power that made for the kind of personal life and the type of social order which their ethical genius led them to envisage as both desirable and possible.

II.

In all the mutations which the conception of God undergoes as we advance from lower to higher levels of purposive behavior, that conception functions chiefly as an expression of the belief: first, that what ought to be is in keeping with the very nature of things, and, secondly, that what ought to be will ultimately be realized. *God may therefore be defined as the power that endorses what we believe ought to be, and that guarantees that it will be.*

Viewed thus, the belief in God is just as indispensable on the ethical level of human thinking as on the authoritative and moral. In relying on reason and experience to inform us what is, we imply, not that reason and experience create what is, but that they discover its true character. What is exists in the objective world of reality. Likewise, when we rely upon reason to inform us of what ought to be, it is because it discovers certain desirable potentialities, the fulfillment of which reason must also assume, if it is to regard them as imposing specific obligations upon us. What can never be realized cannot possibly constitute an aim which we should feel obliged to strive for.

So long as the state of our knowledge could suggest no way by which men at a distance could communicate directly and immediately with one another, it would have been meaningless for anybody to say that people ought some day be able to talk to one another across a continent or an ocean. For, even assuming that such an idea might have presented itself to the fantasy of men, it could have no motive power, since it could suggest nothing that men might do for its realization. But when men began to learn something of the nature of electricity, new possibilities began to present themselves. The potentialities of the telegraph and telephone loomed on the horizon, and their invention became a reasonable ideal for scientists, the moment such an ideal could suggest experiments looking to the eventual utilization of electricity as a means of communication. Today international peace is an unattained ideal. If we are convinced that the ideal is not only unattained but unattainable, it ceases altogether to be an ideal for us, since we cannot possibly have any responsibility to contribute to its realization. But if we see, in the measure of human cooperation already achieved, the potentialities of further achievements that could eventually result in international peace, we may be moved by them to explore these possibilities. But we can conduct such explorations only on the assumption that there are conditions which, if we can discover and conform to them, will result in international peace.

This is the process by which men have achieved whatever desired ends they have set up for themselves. All ideals rest on the assumption that there exists in reality that which, if we can discover it, assures their realization. In some instances, our assumption may prove incorrect. If so, our ideal must be abandoned as illusory and invalid. But we can never abandon all ideals, since it is in our nature that we have purposes in life. The formulation of ideals is an indispensable part of the process by which our long-range purposes are realized. Therefore, on the ethical level of idealistic evaluation, no less than on the impulsive and the moral level, we feel the need of reckoning with what has always been the implication of the God-idea, that whatever ought to be can be, and ultimately will be, realized. This does not point to a static goal, to a single and final consummation of human purpose in "one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves." The events of life create new problems, new wants, new ideals in an eternal process. The goal of the ideal is ever a flying goal, but the process of expectation and achievement goes on, and God is the name we

give to the reality that underlies this process. Our God is the Eternal; belief in Him is a necessary concomitant of all idealistic endeavor.

III.

But not only these abstract considerations point to the unreasonableness of a godless humanism. In the actual effort to live in conformity with what we regard the right kind of life, we experience so many difficulties due to temptation, failure and discouragement that, without the assumption or faith that our effort is in keeping with the inherent nature of reality, and is in the direction of what will finally come about, we could not possibly have the courage to go on trying. Wrongdoing often leads to success, honesty to bankruptcy, sacrifices are wasted, and loyalty is undemanded. There are so much defeat and frustation, lingering disease, death of friends in the prime of life, so much unnecessary suffering and heartless wrongdoing, that if we are not fortified by faith in a Power that endorses what in our most illumined moments we believe to be right, and that makes for its realization, we cannot regard the ought as more than idle fancy, and the hope of a better world as anything more than a mirage.

Particularly in an age when rapidly changing conditions of life accelerate the rate of obsolescense of laws, institutions and *mores,* men are oppressed by a feeling of inner conflict. They feel that much which passes as law and morality is mere pretense, yet they are afraid to break with law or custom for fear of scandalizing their neighbors. This is the age of neuroses. "The neurotic is, so to say, the first human type who lacks a support of an ideology of God of whatever kind, and is thrown entirely on his human qualities on which he tries to live and cannot." (Modern Education by Otto Rank, New York 1932, p. 141.) The resolution of the conflict demands a faith that identifies the very spirit of revolt against existing conditions with the divinely creative forces at work in the universe. This would make it possible for the social revolutionary, notwithstanding his maladjustment to contemporary society, to feel that he has a place in society as an evolving organism. Belief in God, as here conceived, would save men from the illusory rationalization of the neurotic and from the cynicism of the frustrated and world-weary. It would arm the ethically malcontent with iconoclastic zeal, for only the believer in God can destroy the idols to which society renders undeserved homage. Though the society in which such a man lives may collapse about him, he does not feel involved in its fall, since he is confident that the ideals that give meaning and purpose to his life will survive and help to reconstruct a new and better order out of the debris of the old.

This gives us a clue to the psychological basis of the traditional belief in the world to come (*ha-olam ha-ba*). We must bear in mind that the world to come was nothing more than the crystallization of the ancient man's conception of what ought to be. To the extent that what ought to be is infinitely more important than what is, the ancient man was far from mistaken when he placed the center of gravity of his existence not in the here and now but in the world to come. When we recognize this psychological implication in the traditional emphasis upon the world to come, most of what the ancients had to say about the world to come loses its bizarre character. The fact that the beatitude of God's presence is reserved for the world to come is in accord with what experience teaches concerning the true relationship of the belief in God to our ethical strivings. Even the statement (*Peah I*) about the things which bear dividends in this world, and the stock of which is laid up in the world to come, can easily be equated with the ethical approach. It can be interpreted to mean that to live in accordance with what ought to be is to invest in the world to be. *As an investment, the good life implies the existence of a Power that en-*

dorses the risks and sacrifices man makes for the sake of the future.

Whence do we derive this faith in a Power that endorses what ought to be? Not from that aspect of the mind which has to do only with mathematically and logically demonstrated knowledge. Such faith stems from that aspect of the mind which finds expression in the enthusiasm for living, in the passion to surmount limitations, a passion which is uniquely human. Those who possess this enthusiasm, and who consequently strive for a better world, are believers in God. The fact that many lack this enthusiasm does not invalidate the truth, any more than the fact that it took the genius of an Einstein to discover the principle of relativity should lead us to cast a doubt upon its truth. This enthusiasm is man's will to live the maximum life. Just as the will to live testifies (in an intuitive, not in a logical sense) the reality of life, the will to live the maximum life testifies to the realizable character of such life. A world in which the maximum of human life is attainable cannot be a meaningless world. The upshot of all that men have tried to express when they affirmed the existence of God, is that the world has meaning, for God is what the world means to the man who believes in and strives for maximum life.

It is a mistake to lump together into the one category of disbelievers and atheists all who say they do not believe in God, and to classify as believers all who profess theistic belief. A significant classification would divide men into two distinct groups holding two directly opposed attitudes toward life. Those who consider life as a meaningless vanity, as "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing" are the real atheists, though they may prate of God. But those who, at great danger and cost to themselves, are identified with some cause of social reform or humanitarian benefit, enjoy and communicate the experience of life's worthwhileness, despite all its tragic waste and ugliness must be classified with religious believers. They act as witnesses of God regardless of what they say. In their desire to break with the limited traditional conception of God, they may proclaim themselves atheists, yet they are the first to accord genuinely divine honors and adoration to persons, texts and events through which the world promises to come one whit nearer to their hearts' desire. It has been said of Buddha that he was an atheist who became a god. The truth is that in trying earnestly to prove that life had no meaning, Buddha succeeded in giving meaning to his own life, thereby contradicting what he set out to prove.

When men break through their narrow and prejudiced conception of religion and begin to realize that it is inevitable for the conception of God to reflect one's mental and ethical development, they will learn to identify as divine that Power in the world which impels them to make it what it should be. The name of God will then stand for a truth about reality, not in terms of a division between natural and supernatural, but in terms of normal human experience. That truth is that life has meaning and, as such deserves that we give to it, whether despite or because of the evil that mars it, the best that is in us. Men's hearts will then be filled with that exuberance and gratitude which the Psalmist felt when he called upon his soul to greet and praise the Lord.

"Praise the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, praise His holy name!" (Ps. 103:1) They will determine, with the Psalmist, to make their lives a hymn to God.

"I will praise the Lord while I live; I will sing praises unto my God while I have my being." (Ps. 146:2) Theirs will be the faith which even death cannot extinguish, for despite death they will triumphantly proclaim: "Magnified and sanctified be His great name in the world which He hath created according to His will."